

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 3-10 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 1 is amended and claims 8-10 are added.

In the Office Action, claims 1 and 3-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 4,421,327 to Morley et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,762,343 to Zutz. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 includes the feature of the slide ring having an L-shaped cross-section. In contrast, neither Morley nor Zutz teaches or suggests a slide ring having an L-shaped cross-section.

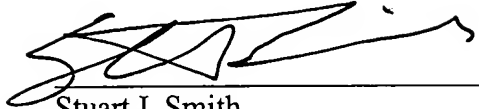
In light of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the combination of Morley and Zutz does not suggest the features of claim 1 and, therefore, rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is inappropriate. As a result, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

In view of the forgoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application, including claims 1 and 3-10, is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance are respectfully requested.

If the Examiner is of the opinion that the prosecution of the application would be advanced by a personal interview, he is invited to telephone undersigned counsel and arrange for such an interview.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 2/5/04

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stuart I. Smith', written over a horizontal line.

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